Facts For the People.

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Both previous and subsequent to the Ashland and Dayton Conventions we were confronted with the question of church leadership. This formed the the subject of frequent discussion among us. We had seen the strife for precedence among the officials of the undivided brotherhood and the consequent envy and distrust it fostered; the severance of Christian ties and the torturing blister it was upon the body religious and for the welfare and prosperity of the church to be, there was a gnawing anxiety that all personal ambition might be abridged in the benevolent desire for general good. We recognized the fact that contingent circumstances were urging us forward in the reformation, for the general good. But that we were to be Luthers, Melanchton, Wesleys, or Calvins, as heads and founders of a distinctively new church never entered our brain. Among each other we discouraged all ambition to that end. We preferred to stand together, as we were side by side in humble submission to the will of Providence, as brethren and coworkers in common. As the doctrine of the church was settled and satisfactorally outlined, before we were born, we had nothing to create; we were not builders. The building had been erected and Providence had placed us in it. Our work was to tear down the stone wall around it, and uproot the thorns and wild vines which others had erected and planted, so that all the world could find free access to its gates of Gospel welcome. Among each other we resolved upon but one watch-word. "Christ our leader, our lawgiver, and head over all things to the church." As we repudiated all creeds and human confessions we would have no leader nor law giver but Christ. When a few enthusiasts sought to make H. R. Holsinger the arbiter, counselor and dictator of the reformation he with commendable wisdom, and with his best friends and associates, resented and destroyed it. As has been asserted the question of doctrine and ordinances had been settled before us for all time to come, and as these were accepted and acquiesced in by all associated together in the reformation, all doctrinal discussion and formulation was disposed of as unnecessary save for others not yet among us. The platform of the *Progressive* Christian, "Progressive principles defined," and the "Declaration of Principles" adopted at the Ashland convention were formulated, remained in existence, and passed before the world as the unchallenged doctrinal foundation of the Gospel on which the re-organization of the church was based. And this was accomplished without a single dissenting voice. Every man intimately connected with the work of those turbulent days knows this to be a fact; and he knows further, that it was not only the settled conviction of the active workers in the effort at reformation that from these doctrines and ordinances there should be no change, but the absolute promise to the many hundreds of sincere men and women, who came with us out of the old traditionary castle, now would or could be made. Through centuries of practices and many severe controversies, these doctrines and ordinances had been tried in the fire and came forth as gold from the furnace, the brighter for the burning.

But from the beginning other questions cofronted us; questions of mere opinion and tradition, such as "Shall all confession of faith be made by the believer before entering the fount of baptism, or shall the Presbyter ask him to confess while in the water? Should the baptized believer be confirmed by the laying on of hands while yet in the water, or shall this be done afterwards on the bank of the stream, at the house, or before the public assembly of the church?" To which reply was invariably made, "Read the 8th chapter of Acts where Apostolic example is given in each case and follow that?" It is safest besides being Apostolic. "Well how are the brethren and sisters to dress? Shall sisters wear bonnets and caps? Shall brethren dress in uniform?" to all of which reply was invariably given, "Our warfare and weapons are not carnal neither is our uniform." Dress in harmony with modesty, good taste, and decency, and have as your ornament a meek and quiet spirit laying aside all pride and superfluity of life and the purity of the church will be assured. Without disputation our Bibles were read, feet-washing was performed by the "single mode" after the example of Christ; a full evening meal composed of whatever material those who prepared it thought best, served either warm or cold was adopted as the Lord's supper. The word supper meant to us then as it does to the scholar and thinker today, a full evening repast. As there was no specific direction as to the kind of food necessary in the Gospel by common consent, we allowed liberty of conscience, in its selection and preparation, we had the confidence in our brethren that they would not spread ample suppers at home, and leave the Lord's table next to bare or spread upon it only the felon and paupers food of bread and water. The salutation of the kiss of charity by common impulse and consent was reduced from a common to a Christian greeting and "passed" only once at the communion. As to open and closed communion we had only Gospel instructions to "Let a man examine *himself* and so let him eat." If we do not invite him to come, he *examines himself*, does come on his own responsiblity, and eats and drinks condemnation, not discerning the Lord's body he does it to *himself* and we are not partakers in his sin. So we neither invite others to come, nor drive them away if they do come. It is the Lord's table, and each eats or remains away upon his own personal choice. We are then neither open nor close communionists.

Our sisters break the loaf and pass the cup to each other as do the brethren as all are one, or equal, in Christ; "While they were yet eating Christ took bread and blessed it," and gave to the disciples to divide and eat, so do we. As we are a decent people, and live in harmony with both the Gospel and the custom of the age, our sisters do not appear in the assembly of the church, or at the communion service bare headed, nor the brethren with heads covered. What the sisters wear on their heads is a matter of personal choice as there is no Gospel precept, save that all our custom and deportment should be modest.

All this settled, young brethren wanted to know how meetings should be opened and closed, revivals conducted and the general affairs of the local church carried on. To all of this the only reply ever given in harmony with the spirit of Gospel teaching, is "In all purely local affairs of the church local taste and local circumstances must govern our actions, save so far as said local affairs and actions are not at variance with the dignity of Christian 'conduct.'"

We administer baptism only to penitent believers, by the primitive or Apostolic manner—Trine immersion and recognize that form when administered by others. No other form is administered received or recognized among us as legal, or of sufficient Gospel authority to entitle its recipient to approved memberships in the church. We are a consistent people, and only recognize and accept as Gospel and legal that which we are willing to do ourselves.

As Christ washed his disciples feet, partook of the supper, and blessed the cup and loaf on the same occasion, we only commune when and where it is done in harmony with this, His example. We ever have been uncompromisingly opposded to our brethren holding memberships in organizations, and especially those of a secret oath bound character, whose duties and obligations conflict with the duties and obligations of a faithful Christian service; and we have that unbending confidence in the integrity of our race to believe that he who has taken upon him such obligations, will sever them when once converted and identified with the church of Christ.

As it relates to the moral and spiritual elements of Christian profession, aside from the doctrinal code we are in harmony with all Evangelical churches and insist upon that sincerity, devotion, earnestness, and full consecration insisted upon by the great Master and the full Apostolic College.

We obey the Bible, carry out its doctrines, observe its ordinances and obey its commands not to *make* us Christians but because we *are* Christians.

Now, in all this there was a singular unanimity among us at the beginning; upon all this we were founded then, and are founded today as a brotherhood. But as time sped we began to be beset with a few minor difficulties for which we ourselves were in part responsible. And it has been a matter of lasting regret with many that we did not correct the evil before its folds were extended. It is not too late now, and as I have been urged as a party to point out the obstacles, and the remedy for their effective removal, attention will now be directed to that part of the subject, to which the most candid and critical attention is invited.

(To be continued next week.)

The Teacher's Opportunity.

Essay read by Sister Barbara Snowberger, at the Johnstown Convention.

This is an age of religious activity. Never before in the history of Christianity have so many men and women been engaged in all kinds of Christian *work* as at present. All fields are open wide before us, where already fruits are ripening. The call comes from Sabbath Schools, from mission stations and from temperance societies: come help us, for the harvest is great, the laborers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest to send laborers unto his vineyard.

In a convention of this kind we hope all present are already interested in the Sunday School work. We wish however to try to enlist all professing Christians to greater interest in, and sympathy *with* the great Sunday School work of our land. The work of Sunday School is a tremendous factor not only in the life of the *child* but also in the life of the *church*, and if teachers realize *this*, the thought cannot help but stimulate their activity in the Master's service. The children of the present day do not have the same home training the children received half a century ago. Many fathers are so busy making money for the ever recurring wants of the family, and mothers have society duties and the cares of the household that there is no time for the spiritual instruction of the children; and then books and all kinds of literature are multiplied to such an extent that no one can keep pace with them. With these opportunities for culture, undreamed of a century since, the systematic study of God's word is neglected in many Christian homes, and in so many homes that can not be called Christian, the Bible is an altogether unknown or unused book. It is a deplorable fact that the pulpit preaching of today does not in many cases reach the children. In the Protestant churches of our large cities few children attend the services of the sanctuary.

The Roman *Catholics*, and *Mormons*, realize better than we do that the strength of the church of the future lies in the children of today; and in all Roman Catholic churches the children are present at the church service, and take part in the worship. In almost all Protestant denominations the Sunday School is the channel through which the church accomplishes its work of instructing the children, and though the church reaches the children in other ways, the regular systematic training in religious instruction is handed over to the Sunday School. The work of the School because it is the simple exposition of God's word lies within the reach of any industrious lay talent and for this same reason is the most powerful agency for the evangelization of the world. We cannot hold in too high esteem the services of the regularly ordained ministry, nor magnify too highly its beneficient effects on the public morals. But the work of the *ministry* would not have the same power for *good*, if the children and youth of the church were not already instructed in the doctrine of the Christian religion in the Sunday School. We have the finest public school system in the world, where the children have opportunities to obtain as good an education as the children of a generation ago had in our colleges and universities. But the education of our public schools is altogether secular, and fits men for the work of this life only. The religious training, and spiritual culture which enables men to do much better service in the world, and prepares them for the enjoyment of the immortal life, is the work of the Sabbath School teacher. In view then of these great